CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for controlling distribution of device information to a plurality of users participating in a messaging session, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in a messaging session;

filtering said device information according to authorization preferences; and

distributing said filtered device information to at least one other user participating in said messaging session, such that said at least one other user is enabled to monitor said particular device utilized by said particular user during said messaging session.

2.   The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said method further comprising the step of:

receiving said device information at, and distributing said filtered device information from, a messaging server communicatively connected via a network to said users.

3. The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said method further comprising the step of:

receiving authorization preferences for said particular device from said particular user.

4. The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said step of receiving device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in a messaging system further comprising the step of:

receiving said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

5. The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said step of filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising the step of:

filtering said device information according to user selected output preferences for said at least one other user.

6.   The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said step of filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising the step of:

filtering said device information according to authorization preferences selected for said messaging session.

7.   The method for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 1, said step of filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising the step of:

filtering said device information according to a bandwidth associated with said messaging session.

8.   A system for controlling distribution of device information
to a plurality of users participating in a messaging session,
said system comprising:

5   a server system communicatively connected to a network;

           said server system further comprising:

           means for receiving device information for a particular
10   device utilized by a particular user participating in a
      messaging session;

           means for filtering said device information according
      to authorization preferences; and

           means for distributing said filtered device information
      to at least one other user participating in said messaging
      session, such that said at least one other user is enabled
      to monitor said particular device utilized by said
20   particular user during said messaging session.

9.   The system for controlling distribution of device
information according to claim 8, wherein said server system is
communicatively connected via a network to a plurality of devices
25   utilized by a plurality of users.

10.   The system for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 8, said server system further comprising:

means for receiving authorization preferences for said particular device from said particular user.

11.   The system for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 8, said means for receiving device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in a messaging system, further comprising:

means for receiving said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

12.   The system for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 8, said means for filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising:

means for filtering said device information according to user selected output preferences for said at least one other user.

13.   The system for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 8, said means for filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising:

means for filtering said device information according to authorization preferences selected for said messaging session.

14.   The system for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 8, said means for filtering said device information according to authorization preferences, further comprising:

means for filtering said device information according to a bandwidth associated with said messaging session.

15. A program for controlling distribution of device information to a plurality of users participating in a messaging session, residing on a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means, said program comprising:

    means for receiving device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in a messaging session;

    means for filtering said device information according to authorization preferences; and

    means for distributing said filtered device information to at least one other user participating in said messaging session, such that said at least one other user is enabled to monitor said particular device utilized by said particular user during said messaging session.

16. The program for controlling distribution of device information according to claim 15, said program further comprising:

    means for receiving authorization preferences for said particular device from said particular user.

17. The program for controlling distribution of device
information according to claim 15, said program further
comprising:

      means for receiving said device information comprising at
least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for
participating, a device type, and a location.

18. The program for controlling distribution of device
information according to claim 15, said program further
comprising:

      means for filtering said device information according to
user selected output preferences for said at least one other
user.

19. The program for controlling distribution of device
information according to claim 15, said program further
comprising:

      means for filtering said device information according to
authorization preferences selected for said messaging session.

20. The program for controlling distribution of device
information according to claim 15, said program further
comprising:

      means for filtering said device information according to a
bandwidth associated with said messaging session.

21.   A method for participating in a messaging session, said method comprising the steps of:

determining device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user to participate in a messaging session; and

transmitting said current device information for distribution to at least one other user participating in said messaging session, such that said device information for said particular device is communicated within said messaging session.

22.   The method for participating in a messaging session according to claim 21, said step of determining device information for a particular device further comprising the step of:

determining said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

23.   The method for participating in a messaging session according to claim 21, said method further comprising the steps of:

filtering a selection of information from said device information according to user output preferences for said at least one other user; and

transmitting only said selection of information for distribution to said at least one other user.

24.   A system for participating in a messaging session, said system comprising:

a client messaging system communicatively connected to a network;

said client messaging system further comprising:

means for determining device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user to participate in a messaging session; and

means for transmitting said current device information for distribution to at least one other user participating in said messaging session, such that said device information for said particular device is communicated within said messaging session.

25.   The system for participating in a messaging session
according to claim 24, said means for determining device
information for a particular device further comprising:

   means for determining said device information comprising at
least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for
participating, a device type, and a location.

26.   The system for participating in a messaging session
according to claim 24, said client messaging system further
comprising:

   means for filtering a selection of information from said
device information according to user output preferences for said
at least one other user; and

   means for transmitting only said selection of information
for distribution to said at least one other user.

27. A program for participating in a messaging session, residing on a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means, said program comprising:

means for determining device information for a particular device utilized by a particular user to participate in a messaging session; and

means for transmitting said current device information for distribution to at least one other user participating in said messaging session, such that said device information for said particular device is communicated within said messaging session.

28. The program for participating in a messaging session according to claim 27, said program further comprising:

means for determining said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

29. The program for participating in a messaging session according to claim 27, said program further comprising:

means for filtering a selection of information from said device information according to user output preferences for said at least one other user; and

means for transmitting only said selection of information for distribution to said at least one other user.

30. A method for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving device information for at least one other device utilized by at least one other user participating in a messaging session at a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in said messaging session; and

outputting said device information through said particular device according to device output preferences, such that said particular device is enabled to monitor said device information for said at least one other device utilized in said messaging session.

31. The method for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 30, said step of receiving device information for at least one other device, further comprising the step of:

receiving said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

32. The method for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 30, said step of outputting said device information through said particular device according to device output preferences, further comprising the step of:

graphically displaying said device information through said particular device according to device graphical output preferences.

33. The method for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 30, said step of outputting said device information through said particular device according to device output preferences further comprising the step of:

audibly outputting said device information through said particular device according to device audible output preferences.

34. A system for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session, said system comprising:

a client messaging system communicatively connected to a network;

said client messaging system further comprising:

means for receiving device information for at least one other device utilized by at least one other user participating in a messaging session at a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in said messaging session; and

means for outputting said device information through said particular device according to device output preferences, such that said particular device is enabled to monitor said device information for said at least one other device utilized in said messaging session.

35. The system for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 34, said means for receiving device information for at least one other device, further comprising:

means for receiving said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

36. The system for monitoring devices utilized within a
messaging session according to claim 34, said means for
outputting said device information through said particular device
according to device output preferences, further comprising:

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     means for graphically displaying said device information
through said particular device according to device graphical
output preferences.

10 37. The system for monitoring devices utilized within a
messaging session according to claim 34, said means for
outputting said device information through said particular device
according to device output preferences further comprising:

     means for audibly outputting said device information through
said particular device according to device audible output
preferences.

38. A program, for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session, residing on a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means, said program comprising:

means for receiving device information for at least one other device utilized by at least one other user participating in a messaging session at a particular device utilized by a particular user participating in said messaging session; and

means for outputting said device information through said particular device according to device output preferences, such that said particular device is enabled to monitor said device information for said at least one other device utilized in said messaging session.

39. The program for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 38, said program further comprising:

means for receiving said device information comprising at least one from among a power level, a signal strength, a cost for participating, a device type, and a location.

40.   The program for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 38, said program further comprising:

5   means for graphically displaying said device information through said particular device according to device graphical output preferences.

41.   The program for monitoring devices utilized within a messaging session according to claim 38, said program further comprising:

      means for audibly outputting said device information through said particular device according to device audible output preferences.